

European Patent Application

"Instant Messaging System"

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Claims:

1. System for transmitting messages over a multimedia network from a sending client to a target client, the messages comprising target client information,

10 the system comprising:

- a plurality of message gateways (3, 7, 8), each message gateway (3, 7, 8) being configured for the reception and/or transmission over at least one dedicated transfer medium, and

- a message broker (1) connected to the message gateways (3, 7, 8) and being provided with a client database (2),

15 wherein a first message gateway receives a message from a sending client over a first transfer medium and transmits the message and/or an information extracted thereof to the message broker (1), the message broker (1) automatically selects an appropriate second transfer medium depending on the content of the client database (2) and the
20 supplied message and/or an information extracted thereof, and the message is sent to the target client by means of a second message gateway configured for a transmission over the second transfer medium selected by the message broker (1).

2. System according to claim 1,

25 characterized by

a common internal message format for the communication respectively between the message broker (1) and the message gateways.

3. System according to anyone of the preceding claims,

30 characterized in that

the message gateways are distributed over the network.

4. System according to anyone of the preceding claims,
characterized in that
the transfer media comprise analog and digital transfer media.
- 5 5. System according to anyone of the preceding claims,
characterized by
at least one message processor (4) provided between the first and the second message
gateway for further processing the content of the message to be transmitted.
- 10 6. System according to anyone of the preceding claims,
characterized in that
the client database (2) comprises addresses of clients, client preferences and/or
characteristics of the transfer network to the corresponding target client.
- 15 7. System according to anyone to the preceding claims,
characterized in that
the message broker (1) is designed to furthermore perform processing control and/or
security processing.
- 20 8. System according to anyone to the preceding claims,
characterized in that
the message broker (1) is designed to furthermore perform accounting and/or billing.
9. System according to anyone of the preceding claims,
characterized in that
a plurality of message brokers (1, 1') is provided
10. System according to claim 9,
characterized in that
at least one message broker (1') being connected with a client database (2') with
reduced capacity.

11. System according to anyone of the preceding claims,
characterized in that
the messages respectively contain a non-granted encrypted and a granted non-encrypted
part.

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12. Message broker unit for a distributed multimedia system,
characterized in that
it is designed to autonomously select an appropriate transfer medium out of a plurality
of transfer media for messages received from a sending client and to be transferred to a
target client, wherein the message broker (1) is connected to a client database (2) and
the transfer medium selection is performed depending on target client information and
the content of the client database (2).

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13. Message broker unit according to claim 12,
characterized in that
the transfer medium selection is performed depending on the target network, the
message type and/or client preferences contained in the client database.

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14. Message broker according to anyone of claims 12 or 13,
characterized in that
the messages respectively contain a non-granted encrypted and a granted non-encrypted
part.

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15. Method for sending messages over a multimedia network from a sending client to a
target client, the messages comprising target client information,
the method comprising the following steps:

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- transmitting the message from the sending client to a message broker (1) over a first
transfer medium, and

- transmitting the message to the target client over a second transfer medium, wherein
the second transfer medium can be identical to the first transfer medium,

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wherein the message broker (1) selects an appropriate second transfer medium out of a
plurality of transfer media depending on the content of a client database (2) connected
to the message broker (1) and the target client information.

16. Method according to claim 15,
characterized in that
the transmission of the message from the sending client to the target client is performed
5 essentially in real-time.

17. Method according to claim 15 or 16,
characterized in that
a conversion from the first transfer medium to the second transfer medium is performed
10 depending on the target network, the message type and/or client preferences contained
in the client database (2).

18. Method according to anyone of claims 15 to 17,
characterized in that
15 before the transmission to the target client, the content of the message is further
processed by digital signing, encryption, watermarking and/or language translation.

19. Method according to anyone of claims 15 to 18,
characterized in that
20 a lifetime is attributed to each message and the message is only transmitted until the
expiration of the lifetime.

20. Method according to anyone of claims 15 to 19,
characterized in that
25 the messages respectively contain a non-granted encrypted and a granted non-encrypted
part.

21. Software program product,
characterized in that
30 when loaded into a computer, it implements a method according to anyone of claims 15
to 20.